respect of forest land, which they have been traditionally in-habiting for ages have not been adequately recognized under the existing rules and guidelines. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs was mandated to formulate a comprehensive Central Legislation to redress this historical injustice done to the forest dwelling tribal communities and for clear assertion of their legal rights on land and other traditional rights.

This Ministry accordingly prepared a draft "Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005" to provide a legislative frame for recognition of forest rights of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes, in consultation with the concerned Ministries and other stakeholders. The draft Bill proposed to recognize such rights on land, minor forest produce, etc. of forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes. The Bill was posted on the website of the Ministry seeking comments of the public and all stakeholders till 10.7.2005. The Ministry has received comments/suggestions from a large number of individuals/organizations, either supporting the Bill or opposing the same on various grounds. In the light of comments/suggestions received, the draft Bill has been further modified to reconcile the twin objective of undoing historical injustice done to the tribal communities with the concern for environmental protection. The proposed Bill is, however, still a tentative draft Bill and to be finalized as per the established procedure. No time frame can be indicated for its introduction in the Parliament.

The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Rights) Bill

568. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalized the draft of the proposed Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Rights) Bill;

(b) whether any major changes have been made in the original draft bill due to stiff resistance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, backed by the environmental activists/NGOs;

(c) whether Government would attempt to secure a consensus of both the environmental and human rights lobbies to steer through the bill during the Winter Session of Parliament; and

(d) the provisions made in new draft to harmonise the law and counter claims of the various interests connected claims of the various interests connected with the Bill?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Tribal Affairs have prepared a draft "Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill, 2005" to provide a legislative frame for recognition of forest rights of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes, in consultation with the concerned Ministries, including the Ministry of Environment & Forests and other stakeholders. The Bill was also posted on the website of the Ministry seeking comments of the public and all stakeholders till 10.7.2005 and consultation were held with the wildlife experts/environmentalists and experts on tribal rights issues. In the light of comments/suggestions received from various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment & Forests, the draft Bill has been further modified to reconcile the twin objectives of undoing historical injustice done to the tribal communities with the concern for environmental protection. The proposed Bill is, however, still tentative draft Bill and to be finalized as per the established procedure. No time frame can be indicated for its introduction in the Parliament.

Impact of draft Tribal Bill

569. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present draft Tribal Bill will not only destroy forests, but also wipe out tigers in all the scheduled tribe areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that this bill will destroy the egalitarian nature of tribal communities and it would create landless labour;

(d) if so, whether Government are going to tackle this situation; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (e) No, Sir. The objective of the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill, 2005, being formulated by this Ministry, is to recognize and vest the forests rights and occupation in forests land in forest dewlling Scheduled Tribes who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose